

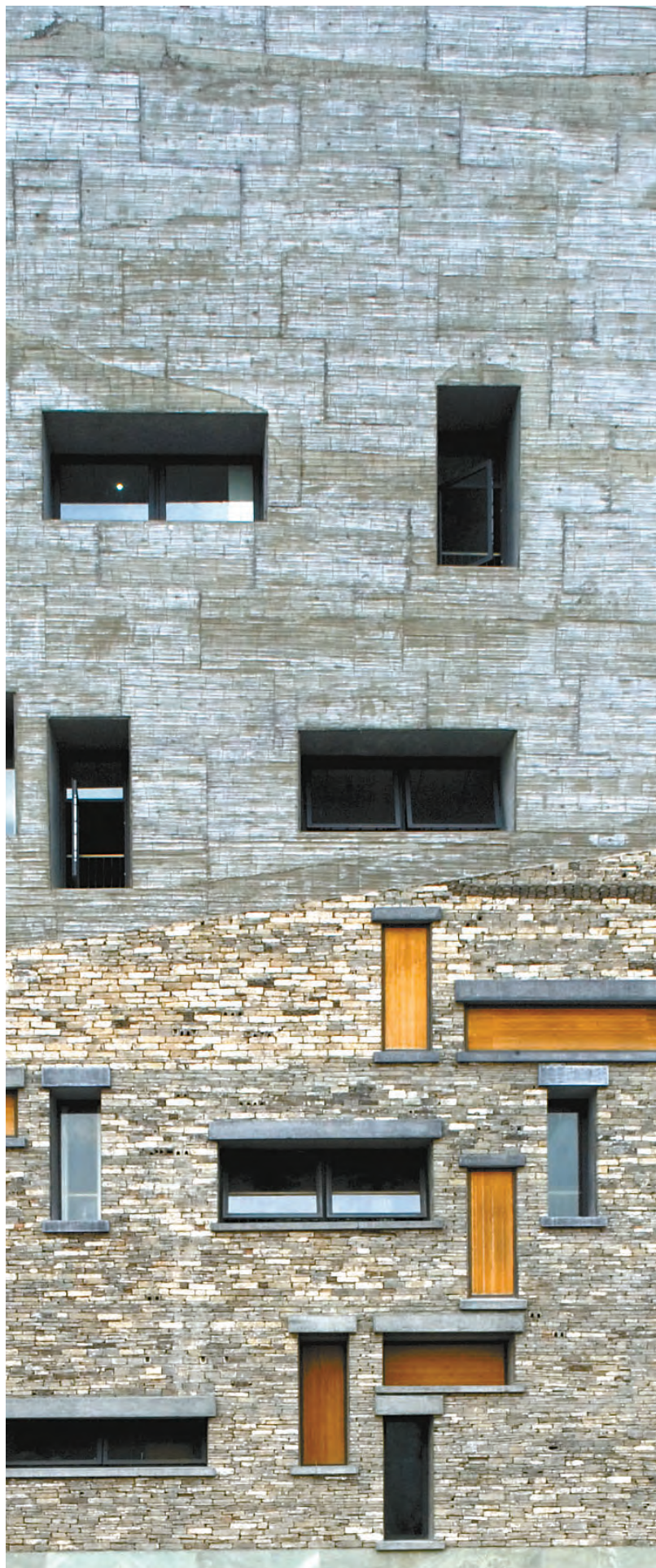


China's architect

Before he became the first Chinese national to win the Pritzker Architectural Prize, Wang Shu wasn't not so famous at home. But that's about to change.

The new Ningbo History Museum is just one of Wang's many stunning designs that draw on Suzhou gardening concepts to achieve a harmonious balance with their surroundings.

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Tobacco tax hike hoped to curb smoking



It's still uncertain whether the government will raise taxes on tobacco products.

Spencer Platt/Getty Images/CFP

By Zhao Hongyi

As the annual National People's Congress (NPC) and Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) closed this week, deputies and members appealed for new measures to curb smoking in the country.

The measures proposed include a forceful requirement to print a notice about the dangers of smoking on each cigarette package and a higher tax on tobacco and cigarettes.

But beyond the conference halls, their appeals were met with harsh disapproval.

China has more than 350 million smokers and another 540 million people who experience secondhand smoke, according to a report by the Ministry of Health in 2008.

In 2011, annual cigarette production grew to 2.41 trillion from 1.87 trillion in 2004. More than 1.2 million smokers die due to smoking-related disease each year in China.

Fewer than 24 percent of adults know that smoking can cause stroke, heart disease and lung cancer, said Ma Li, a deputy of the NPC.

"People have the right to know more about the dangerous results of their choice to smoke," said Ma, who supported adding pictures and text to each cigarette package.

China signed the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control proposed by the World Health Organization in January 2006 and promised to implement the requirements in the conven-

tion by January 9, 2011.

The convention requires 50 percent of each cigarette package be used to print health warnings with eye-catching clear words and pictures.

It also requires clear lists of the ingredients of the cigarettes and a list of the possible diseases that can be caused by smoking.

But since 2008, domestic cigarette packages only contain the words, "Smoking is harmful to your health. Stopping will reduce the risk."

"Chinese cigarette factories print the warning pictures on the packages of their products for export," Ma said. "Why can't they do the same on cigarettes sold at home?"

Over the past five years, deputies and members of the NPC have raised more than 1,700 proposals related to the tobacco industry, but none have motivated the government to act.

That is because the tobacco industry is a cash cow under a government monopoly.

The China National Tobacco Corporation (CNTC), sole national owner and manager of all tobacco-related products in the country, reported profit of 117.7 billion yuan in 2011.

Another proposal called on the government to raise its tax on tobacco and cigarettes.

At present, taxes on Chinese cigarette factories include a 25-45 percent consumption tax, a 17 percent value-added tax and a 25 percent corporate income tax.

These high tax burdens have encouraged many cigarette factories to specialize in high-end, luxury cigarettes that retail for thousands of yuan per package.

Most are consumed by officials and the nouveau riche, leading most members of the public to recognize them as the spoils of corruption.

Other factories produce cheap, low-quality cigarettes aimed at the country's booming low-end markets.

"To discourage people from smoking and reduce its prevalence, we are considering raising taxes further – especially on low-end cigarettes," said Chen Zhu, the minister of health.

The minister's proposal was condemned online.

"The consumers of low-end cigarettes are among the most disadvantaged people in our society," a netizen called "walkingtan" said. "Why don't they raise the taxes on the expensive brands?"

"The government prohibited smokers from lighting up in public venues like restaurants, shopping malls and entertainment sites. And what was the result? They should just firmly implement their earlier prohibition," said Shenyi_wuyecao.

"We should investigate why we have so many smokers and help them break the habit," said Wang Jun, a professor of social sciences at Peking University. "Most are worried and anxious about their standard of living."

Behind the headline

Tobacco profits outpace Walmart

The state-owned China National Tobacco Corporation may have larger annual profits than HSBC and Walmart, according to a recent report released by the Industrial Bank.

A rare glimpse into the tobacco-giant's finances revealed a net income of 117.7 billion yuan in 2010 on sales of 770.4 billion yuan.

According to Bloomberg, HSBC reported \$16.8 billion (106.4 billion yuan) in profit for its most recent fiscal year, while Walmart reported a net income of \$15.7 billion.

The 2011 figures from the China National Tobacco were not printed.

The Industrial Bank released this data because China National Tobacco is

buying a 5.2 billion yuan stake in the Shanghai-listed bank.

In 2010, the tobacco company surpassed the total profits of the world's three largest tobacco companies: Philip Morris International, British American Tobacco and Altria Group.

(By Huang Daohen)

Brief

Men dominate the blogosphere

Forty-something men were named the most influential bloggers in China, according to a study from Shanghai's Fudan University.

At a media studies roundtable held on March 9, the university's public opinion and communications research laboratory released a report on the "discussion leaders" of Sina Weibo, the most active microblogging service in the country.

Zhang Zhian, an associate professor at the School of Communications and Design at Sun Yat-sen University in Guangdong Province, said that the study constructed an analytical model using the Palas Public Opinion Monitoring System to assess the influence of bloggers on Weibo.

The model analyzed five key dimensions – online influence, effect on traditional media, affinity and ability to spark debate and reader activity – to select 5,000 candidates, from which a top 100 was selected.

Male bloggers represented 91 of the Top 100 bloggers, and all of the Top 20.

The most influential female blogger was prominent media figure Hung Huang, who ranked 24th, followed by media personality Rose Luqiu from Phoenix Television and the young Shanghaiese writer Ren Xiaowen.

Other top female bloggers include sociologist Li Yinhe, who writes reviews of books, films and television shows with an eye on social and sexual issues. Another widely followed young writer, Jiang Fangzhou, shares life experiences and her thoughts on new books.

The study also showed that the 32-51 age group was the most influential, with 72 of the Top 100 being born in the 1960s and 1970s. While bloggers born after 1990 were active, their overall influence is limited, according to the study.

Although microblogging sites like Sina Weibo provide a platform where anyone can have a voice, the report showed that the power to guide public opinion and discussion is largely concentrated in the hands of a select few.

Of the Top 100, there were 33 media personalities, 26 academics, 20 writers and 17 businesspeople, showing that the ability to consistently direct discourse on the Internet is mostly limited to elites already endowed with economic, social or cultural influence.

Zhang hopes the report will urge influential bloggers to be more responsible about what they say online, creating a healthier discussion forum for netizens.

He also acknowledged that the model used in the study can be improved, including deeper analysis of the roles played by influential bloggers in response to various incidents.

(Agencies)

Rivals in marriage

Top streaming video sites merge to dominate

By Huang Daohen

Business in the cash-burning streaming video market is war, and even leading web-sites are not immune to being muscled out.

That might explain the surprising merger announced Monday by Youku and Tudou, the country's two top online video providers.

Due to increasing competition and the costs of bandwidth and content acquisition, the two companies decided to join forces, forming what could be the largest in the industry.



Youku CEO Victor Koo (left) and Tudou CEO Gary Wang at a press conference CFP Photo

Surprise merger

Nations have no enemies or friends, but only interests. And so it is for businesses.

Late Monday afternoon, the country's two largest streaming video providers and long-time rivals, Youku and Tudou, announced they will merge to become Youku Tudou Inc.

Under the agreement, the two firms, currently listed in the US, will merge through a 100 percent stock-for-stock transaction, which is worth more than \$1 billion (6.34 billion yuan).

Youku, with a value of around \$2.85 billion – six times more than Tudou – will own 71.5 percent of the new firm; Tudou will control the remaining 28.5 percent.

All shares of Tudou listed on the Nasdaq will be canceled and Youku will continue to be traded on the New York Stock Exchange.

The *Beijing Youth Daily* reported that the merger, expected to be completed in the third quarter, has been approved by the boards of both firms and is only awaiting shareholder approval.

Youku's founder and CEO Victor Koo would head the new firm and Tudou's CEO Gary Wang would join the new board of directors.

Once completed, the new Youku Tudou Inc will provide more than a third of all streaming video in the country.

The move came as a surprise, considering that the two companies have been engaged in fierce legal battles over copyright infringement and unfair competition.

In a lawsuit last month, Youku sued Tudou for the company's misuse of its copyrighted content.

Koo seemed willing to let the disputes pass.

"We expect to see significant synergy in a number of areas," he said in a brief meeting to the new company's staff Tuesday.

"We intend to lead the next phase of online videos. The fact that we are the two strongest brands with the most content will make our new company a much stronger competitor," Koo said.

Tudou's Wang agreed. "Youku and Tudou share a vision for the future of online video in China and how to deliver the best user experience possible," he said.

"This transaction further strengthens our market position, and the new firm will provide the best-in-class experience to users," he added.

Tudou said its platform will remain separate, though operations may be merged.

Bigger and better?

Market watchers were surprised by the sudden merger.

Steven Kang, an industrial analyst at Oriental Securities in Beijing, said that the alliance of the two rivals was the result of fierce market competition amid rising costs.

"The deal actually indicates how difficult the country's online video market is," Kang said. "Both Youku and Tudou have realized how hard the road would be if they stayed separate."

That may sound contradictory in the world's largest Internet market, with more than 500 million users.

According to a Nielsen report, about 325 million users watch streaming video: this number is expected to reach 445 million next year.

Corporate spending on online advertising is growing 30 to 40 percent per year as large multinationals such as KFC, Nike and Coca-Cola begin advertising on video websites,

the report said.

However, online video is a money-burning business due to the high costs of bandwidth and content acquisition. Wen said neither Tudou nor Youku has turned a profit in the past three years.

Tudou's net loss in the fourth quarter last year was 148.9 million yuan. For the full year, the figure climbed to 511.2 million yuan, while Youku reported a net loss of 172.1 million yuan.

Kang said the move should help boost their ability to profit. "Bringing the two giants together is a good move, as it will help the companies reduce copyright spending and other operational costs," he said.

But Kang said there are still too many players in the sector. Other portals such as Sina, Tencent and Baidu have developed their own online video platforms.

"We know the market is way too competitive. There are 10 players, where there should be only two or three," Kang said. "But the merger is a step in the right direction as it will lead to a reshuffle in the industry."

Shares of the two companies soared Tuesday following the news. Youku shares were up more than 30 percent, while Tudou rose more than 150 percent.

"Investors realize that such mergers can make the industry healthier. That's why they are positive about Youku and Tudou," Kang said.

But Li Lin, a local IT critic, said the deal will bring little comfort to the two giants. "The industry has long been mired in debt due to soaring costs," he said.

Since quality content has become the main way for online video companies to

attract traffic, Li said demand for broadcasting rights for popular movies and TV series will still push up their operating costs.

Additionally, online video companies themselves have few ways to generate revenue apart from advertising, Li said.

"The new entity will have a long way to go," he said.

Monopoly threat

Others fret the Youku-Tudou merger could usher in a monopoly.

"I am afraid that the online-video industry will be monopolized by the new Youku Tudou Inc. This may put pressure on some of the smaller players like 56.com," said an employee surnamed Ma at ku6.com, another small streaming video provider.

But Gong Yu, CEO of iQiyi under the search giant Baidu, seemed to be less worried about the possibility of a monopoly.

"From an industry perspective, the deal is conducive for the healthy development of the sector," Gong was quoted by Reuters as saying.

"The cost of purchasing copyrights will be more effectively controlled with fewer online-video companies. It will also reduce the competition for bandwidth and market talent," Gong said.

Kang agreed. "The merger does not mean that the two companies are without competitors. Success will still depend on their performance in the future," he said.

Netizens, however, remained pessimistic.

"In the past, I would turn to Tudou when Youku didn't work, and vice versa. However, after the merger, there will be no alternatives," said Vivian He, a local office worker.

"We need to fight to prevent a monopoly," she said.

Lecture to help students start careers

Making a fortune out of nothing can be thrilling, but that doesn't come without risk – especially for recent college graduates.

To help student entrepreneurs boost their chance of success, Lu Xiaoyu, director of the Yangtze River Design and Research Center, spoke to more than 40 students from local colleges on March 8 at Capital Normal University.

The students were participants in the ongoing College Students Start-up Contest, sponsored by the Beijing Branch of China Postal Savings Bank.

In her lecture, Lu explained the meaning of entrepreneurship and the challenges students face in pursuing a start-up. She also gave suggestions about how students could start their business ventures.

Lu said she was pleased to know that students are becoming more pragmatic.

Zhang Jin, a student with the Education College of Capital Normal University, said he always wanted to have an opportunity to learn more about entrepreneurship. "The lecture taught us a lot about the demands of operating a business. It will help a lot in the coming contest," he said.

The contest, now in its third year, is hosted by the Beijing Municipal Committee of Chinese Communist Youth League, the China Postal Savings Bank and KAB Entrepreneurship Education Institute.

The event aims to raise young people's awareness of social innovations and provide advice and financial support to their start-ups.

Final selections will be held in early April.

(By David Huang)



Lu Xiaoyu (left) guides students Photo by Sun Yibo

Instincts take British TV personality around the world

"Adrenaline junky" is how Ian Wright, the affable host of the Discovery Channel show *Globe Trekker*, describes himself. As a seasoned international traveler, Wright has left his footprints on more than 60 countries around the world – including China.

This Suffolk-born Briton, with his dry wit and charisma, is always longing for the outdoors.

"Comforts don't interest me," he said.

Before appearing on TV, Wright was already a seasoned globetrotter. He spent three months in Guyana as part of a Prince's Trust initiative called Operation Raleigh; his footprints could also be found in Egypt, India, Venezuela, Lebanon and Romania.

"Never think too much before you go" is Wright's travel philosophy. "If you spend too much time thinking about it, then you'll miss it," he said. "Things come, keep looking, meet different people and exchange ideas. There is no rule."

Wright thinks the first step to traveling always comes from one's instincts. "Don't think about it. Buy a flight ticket tomorrow and then worry about it on the plane," he said.

Wright recently brought his "optimistic ninja spirit" to China with the show *Invite Mr. Wright*.

His first experience in China was 20 years ago. This time, he took a three-month journey to Harbin, Heilongjiang Province.

"Everything was new to me," Wright said. He performed the Niu Yangge, a traditional dance in northeastern China, joined locals to celebrate the Lantern Festival and went for winter swimming in -25 C water.

Like most travelers, Wright has plenty of unforgettable stories.

In his 2010 visit to Venezuela, he was almost strangled by a python while filming in a paddy. "The python lurked somewhere close to the filming scene," he said. "It was so close at that time."

In Vanuatu, when Wright and his crew visited the most accessible volcano in the world, the wind suddenly changed and blew a giant piece of lava to within two meters away of their heads.



Ian Wright has his sights set on the Chinese audience with his latest show on the mainland.

CFP Photos



Wright experiencing traditional Chinese culture in Harbin.

"We ran like scared rabbits, crying like babies," Wright said. "But now I wish I had a lava burn mark on my arm to

boast about in the pub."

Although Wright has a huge appetite for going places, he never formally thought

about doing it as a job, let alone working as a TV host.

Before joining Discovery Channel, he ran a community center with his wife. He also loved painting, and had an exhibition of his work displayed in London.

"It was a coincidence. Once I saw an ad in a newspaper. My friend said I could give a try. So I shot a short film about introducing food in the bathroom and sent it out," Wright said. "And amazingly, I got the job."

But it was not just luck that landed Wright the job. It was his humor.

"Do you see the necklace around my neck? It is made of the teeth of a crocodile I killed once," he said once, before ribbing the audience: "Come on, you won't believe that, will you? It's just a two-pound bargain sale."

Wright travels with a small crew of only three to five people. "I'm the boring glue that sticks the team together," he said. Each member has his own expertise, such as shooting video or editing audio.

"In every country we meet

incredible people, from an atomic bomb victim in Japan to a blind masseur in Cambodia," Wright said. "The people I love are the people I meet by accident. Sitting on a back street of Mongolia talking to a man who works in a run-down garage, who speaks five languages and has two degrees, makes me feel the size of an ant."

Wright also knows how to improvise, which is important when the elements works against the team.

"Once, when we filmed in Indonesia, our boat was turned over and all the pieces of equipment were ruined," he said. "But we made the show with our mobile phones. And that is how you adapt."

"I don't mind being called crazy or what," he said. "It's me. It is the way it is. I like to communicate with others in this way. And there is no secret to doing this; there is nothing mysterious about a rucksack. All you need is money, passport and a change of clothes. Forget the rest."

(By Wu Tong)

China-UK relations starting to take off

Exclusive interview with British ambassador to China Sebastian Wood

By Han Manman

From this summer's London Olympic and Paralympic Games to the Queen's Diamond Jubilee to the 200th anniversary of Charles Dickens' birth, 2012 is turning out to be a historic year for Britain. The year also has meaning to China, as it marks the 40th anniversary of China-UK full diplomatic relations.

The UK recognized the People's Republic of China in 1950, becoming the first Western government to do so. On March 13, 1972, China and Britain signed a communique that established diplomatic relations between the two countries. In the following 40 years, despite some twists and turns, the relationship between the two countries has steadily matured.

In the exclusive interview with *Beijing Today*, British ambassador Sebastian Wood said the relationship between the two countries has accelerated and will be greatly improved in the near future.

China-UK: a historical opportunity

BT: What's your view of China-UK relations over the last 40 years?

Wood: I think it's grown a very long way. And I believe it's growing faster now than ever. In the last 40 years, our relationship has stood up, and in the next 40 years, we should take to the sky, we should fly. I do believe we have that potential. But I think we're still in the very early stages of what could become a crucial, important economic relationship for both countries.

BT: In the past 40 years, what historical events or diplomatic successes impressed you the most? What were the most valuable experiences and inspirations for the two countries?

Wood: The greatest single achievement was UK and China successfully handling Hong Kong, and this was a difficult historical problem for the two countries to deal with. Deng Xiaoping came up with an excellent idea – "One Country, Two Systems." Then we would be able to peacefully transfer Hong Kong, which has continued to do very well since 1997. I think the people of Hong Kong should feel very proud because it is now really one of the great world cities. I think now we can look at it as a great achievement of our relationship and build a very strong bridge between our two countries.

BT: When talking about China-UK relations, many

people's impressions are "stable but developing slowly." In your opinion, how do we further build UK-China ties? In which field do you think Britain most needs to see increased cooperation with China?

Wood: China is moving to a new stage of economic development, Chinese people are living more in cities, they have higher incomes, China needs more domestic consumption and more services. These areas are where British companies have a lot to offer, whether it's banking, insurance, health care, education, retail or luxury. All these areas will be growing very fast in China. And this is a very good fit with the strength of the UK. And also, China is looking to diversify its overseas' investments after the US dollar. And the UK is an excellent destination and also the best gateway to Europe, which is still the world's largest single market.

BT: While China believes the problems in Syria are its internal affairs, Prime Minister David Cameron recently asked leaders in China to "think hard" about its stance toward Syria. How does the British government view China's policy of not intervening in the affairs of other countries?

Wood: I think our view is that we have strong shared interests in stability and transparency in the Middle East, which is a region of great importance for all of us. And we were very disappointed when the draft Security Council resolution was vetoed recently because we thought that it was necessary in order



British ambassador to China Sebastian Wood

Photo by Zhen Hongge

to ease internal growing violence in Syria. But I also believe that we have the same goal. Our goal is to restore stability to Syria in a sustainable way, and it has to be based on the sustainable political solution inside the country. So, we want to continue working with China, and our view remains that we should get behind the efforts of the League of Arab States who have come up with what we view as a workable plan, a fixable plan for a political transition in Syria.

Ready for London Olympics

BT: What impressed you most about the Beijing Olympic Games? What are London's greatest strengths compared with Beijing? How do you combine the experience of Beijing with London's own advantages to host a successful Olympic Games?

Wood: The most impressive thing about the Beijing Olympic Games was the Olympics itself: it was a great sporting event. I understand that the Beijing Organizing Committee put the athletes at the heart of their plans, and this is the lesson we have learned for London.

There was no competition between London and Beijing; it's a partnership. Beijing was a wonderful Olympics, a majestic opening, which I will always remember. In London, I'm confident that it will be a great international party.

BT: The London Olympic slogan is "Green Games,

Green Future." The city is also ambitious to host the most environmentally friendly Olympic Games in Olympic history. Will London achieve that goal?

Wood: We want the Olympics to be the most sustainable ever. So, we are designing all the infrastructure and all the stadiums and buildings so they will have a life after the Olympics. They will carry on being used either for sports facilities for local clubs or organizations, or residential accommodation or public parks. And we are very confident that the legacy of the London Olympics for the people of London will be a very strong one.

One example is the main Olympic stadium, which has 80,000 seats, but it's designed in a way that after the Olympics, we can take the top of the stadium away so the upper tiers of the seats can just be removed, leaving a small stadium behind, only 40,000 seats. And that is a suitable size for one of London's football teams to use.

BT: Last year, the world was shaken as the worst riots in decades hit England. How do you answer the concerns from tourists and make sure the London Olympics will be safe and secure? It is said that the British government is considering preventing rioters from using Twitter and other social networking websites, is that true?

Wood: London has big events all the time, not just Olympics, but the G20 summit and big sporting events, the security record is very good

because the police are very experienced, they understand how to manage the security of political events. I'm confident we will have a safe and secure Olympics.

There were some discussions after the riots last summer about the role that social media had played at the time. And there was a bitter debate about it in the media and among politicians. But in conclusion, everyone thought it would be wrong to blame social media for what happened.

So, there were no restrictions introduced. It's worth remembering that it was through social media like Facebook and Twitter that very large groups of people organized to come out after the riots in their communities to clear everything up and repair some of the damage which were done by rioters. The number of people who come out to clean up the communities was actually much larger than the number of people who did damage. They used social media to organize. So, it would be aiming at the wrong target to restrict people from using social media.

BT: Britain will hold the biggest ever arts and culture festival in China next month. Is that a warm-up for the London Olympics? What's the highlight of the festival?

Wood: There will be more than 100 events across China in 16 cities with lots of highlights. But most of the events we have not yet announced because we want to keep some as a surprise. We want to provide the best British culture to China before the Olympics.

Clothing swap party transforms old junk into fashion gold

By Wu Hao

The time has arrived to update old looks and get a new wardrobe. But not everyone is reaching for their wallets.

A cheaper and more eco-friendly way of filling out one's wardrobe is to attend a clothing swap party, which Cafetique held two weeks ago.

The fashion exchange and networking event is organized by Stacey Niu and her friends. On the afternoon of March 4, Cafetique, located in an arty district near the Drum and Bell Towers, was crowded with girls.

"I didn't expect so many people would come," Niu said.

Cafetique is separated into two parts by a screen, with half of it being a cafe and the other half a clothing store.

The clothes that girls brought were laid out on chairs or put on hangars. Participants were expected to bring at least three items. They could try on any of the clothes there while socializing. Leftovers were donated to charity shops.

"The idea simply popped up to throw a clothing swap party like we have in private with close friends," Niu said.

While exchanging clothes saves time and money, it's also a chance for people to "meet each other, exchange ideas and expand their social circle," Niu said.

It took some time for her and her friends to find a place like Cafetique, which would let them use their space for free.

"Most are very commercial and only wanted to rent out their space for more than 1,000 yuan for the afternoon, which we couldn't afford," Niu said.

In the end, she chose Cafetique over a local community center.

"The place is perfect, as it's half-cafe, half-boutique," Niu said. "You can sit down for tea or coffee and try on clothes."

She said she also appreciated the owner, who was nice enough to "not say anything even after we made the shop messy and packed it with people."

Because this was the first time Niu has organized an event like this, she admitted there were improvements she would like to make according to the feedback.

"Venue is very important, and we will put items into zones according to value," she said. "Maybe we'll do a theme, such as bags or shoes. And we would like to do it at least every season."

Niu said her idea of running "Beijing female network" is part of her long-term plan.

"We want to hold many small events and activities with a warm, friendly atmosphere for all ages, so those who live in the city can meet and make some like-minded friends and build relationships [with people] from a variety of backgrounds," she said. Women can "exchange ideas, share information and help each other with many aspects of life."

A few simple rules:

1. Everything should be washed, dried and in good condition. Dresses should be ironed.
2. Things like bathing suits, undergarments and socks – things that are worn close to the body – aren't particularly popular.
3. Items leftover from the swap, unless the owner wishes to take them back, are donated to charity.
4. No fighting! Rock-paper-scissors for popular items.

For more information, email: flyflyshine@hotmail.com



At the March 4 clothing swap at Cafetique.

Photos by Wu Hao



Outdoor clubs recruit new members

By Annie Wei

Spring is here, meaning it's time for outdoor sport clubs recruit new members.

Beijing Lantian Emergency Rescue Team

As more people take an interest in outdoor activities, more accidents happen.

The rescue team was founded in 2007 by a group of warm-hearted outdoor sports fans. They did an impressive job since the Sichuan earthquake in May 2008, and the rescue team has expanded quickly all over the country.

Right now it has 10,000 members in 43 cities. The group has regular training to prepare for water, grassland, mountain and fire rescue, and also weekly physically training like hiking.

Anyone older than 18 years can apply for volunteering by submitting your application at chinaear.org.

However, many new members find a loose connection with the group because they do not seem to have enough members responsible for management.

"Be proactive," said Xu Ke, a core member. New members are encouraged to apply for several teams to see which one fits the most.

To become a formal



Hiking is one of the popular outdoor sports for spring and summer.

CFP Photo

member, newcomers need to meet some basic requirements such as pass tests for using wireless equipment and first aid certification at the Red Cross Society of China's Beijing Branch, knowing how to tie knots and physical fitness.

Newcomers are advised to carry weight to hike Fragrant Hills for three months. "After three to five times, your legs stop hurting and you can increase the weight from 10 kilograms to 25," Xu said. When you can walk around the Fragrant Hills with 20 kilogram weight for a whole day,

you are ready.

Beijing Bicycle Polo

Although the country claims to have been playing polo since the Tang Dynasty, modern China seems very removed from the game.

In fact, you do not have to be an ancient royal to play polo. You do not need a spacious grass field. To play polo in a hectic city, what you need is a bike, not a horse.

A small group of people get together at the Worker's Gymnasium West Gate every Sunday from 2 to 4:30 pm to play polo.

Beijing Mashup

This sport and social group, founded by several expats, welcomes the spring with lots of events and is opening more leagues, including flag football, dodgeball and badminton.

Its flag football leagues will start next month. The flag football league will open more divisions and encourage people to play in different divisions. One is for social and one for more competitive practice.

For more information and sign up, check mashupasia.com.

Boating to start in spring



A worker repairs a boat at Yuyuantan Park.

Photo provided by Beijing Youth Daily

With temperatures rising above 10 C lately, parks with lakes have begun to bring out their boats. Within another two weeks, visitors will be able to enjoy paddling on the water again.

Houhai attracts the most tourists, but you can also boat at Yuyuantan, Zizhuyuan, Taoranting, Qingnianhu and Longtan.

Yuyuantan

Where: 13 Xisanhuan Zhong Lu, Haidian District

Open: 7 am - 6 pm

Tel: 8865 3800

Zizhuyuan

Where: 45 Baishiqiao Lu, Haidian District

Open: 6 am - 9 pm

Tel: 6842 0055

Qingnianhu

Where: Andeli Bei Jie, Andingmen Wai Dajie, Dongcheng District

Open: 6 am - 7 pm

Tel: 8411 6321

Longtan Park

Where: 18 Longtanhu Lu, Chongwen District

Open: 6 am - 7 pm

Tel: 6712 0046

(By Wei Ying)

ASK Beijing Today

Email your questions to: weiyiing@ynet.com

Friends are visiting Beijing this month and I want to take them to the Bird's Nest. Is there a number I can call for information like ticket prices and visiting hours?

The Bird's Nest hotline at 8437 3008 offers information on exhibitions, performances, wheelchair rentals and directions. It is open daily from 9 am to 6 pm, and tickets cost 50 yuan. Call before you go because it might close on special occasions.

I have two small pet rabbits. One is sick, so I took it to a local veterinarian. The vet prescribed some medicine, but the rabbit has refused to eat the tablets. Do you have any suggestions?

It is difficult to feed rabbits medicine because they refuse to eat anything they do not like. If you force them, they will just throw it up. Try chopping up the tablet and diluting it in your pet's drinking water.

Do you know of any community service volunteer activities in Beijing? Something like helping out in orphanages or looking after disabled children? I'd be really happy to get any ideas I can.

There are many volunteer opportunities in town. Go to ngoen.org's volunteer recruitment page, where there's a lot of information about a range of topics from helping with English translations to teaching migrant children football.

Can you recommend a good spinal surgeon?

One of the best orthopedic hospitals in the city is Beijing Jishuitan Hospital, and we've heard they do very good spinal surgeries. But it's a public hospital, so expect a long line of patients. People usually need to wait a few days for surgery, and you can get a quote before the procedure. The hospital has a department for foreigners and VIPs, but expect to pay more if you go there.

Beijing Jishuitan Hospital

Where: 2 Qiujia Hutong, Xicheng District

Tel: 5851 6688

(By Wei Ying)

Nation's first Pritzker seeds for the future

By Sally Zhang

On February 27, Wang Shu became the first Chinese of the Pritzker Architecture Prize – the world's most prestigious award for achievements in architectural design.

Xiangshan Campus of China Academy of Art, Phase II (2004-2007): More than 2 million salvaged tiles cover the roofs of the campus buildings.

When the honor was announced, Wang Shu was touring universities in the US to speak about natural ways to build a diverse world. His presentations focused on the familiar points of nature, urbanization and Chinese calligraphy.

While his talks were nothing new, this year Wang had a surprising number of visitors.

Students and academics filled every corner of the room to catch the lecture by the 2012 Pritzker Prize laureate.

The Pritzker Architectural Prize, often called the "Nobel of architecture," has been presented annually since 1979. However, it had little connection with China before Wang Shu. The closest the Pritzker had to a Chinese winner was Chinese-American architect I.M. Pei, who was awarded the prize in 1983.

"[The announcement] made me realize that I've gone so far and done so many things, and that my commitment has paid off," he said.

Wang is modest, attributing his victory as much to his personal achievements as to China's architectural tradition.

The last two decades have been a period of rapid building in China. However, most of the notable constructions, such as Terminal 3 of Beijing Capital International Airport, the new China Central Television building and the Bird's Nest – have been designed by foreigners.

The jury of the 2012 Pritzker Architecture Prize consisted of nine people, including influential architects, previous Pritzker laureates, academics and a judge from the US Supreme Court Justice. That team selected Wang Shu from hundreds of competing nominees.

"We acknowledge that China will play and is playing a significant role in the development of architecture. Wang Shu's quality work has impressed us with its local character and universal design that responds to transformation," the jury said.

Before 2012, Wang was hardly a household name in China. Although he had designed many buildings at home, his greatest claim to fame was the title of head of the School of Architecture at the China Academy of Art in Hangzhou.

But Wang's success stretches back much farther his current occupation.

Born in Urumqi, capital of the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, Wang frequently traveled 4,000 kilometers between the city and Beijing to visit his mother. The experience gave him a chance to see vast and changing landscapes – continuing source of inspiration.

He began his path to architecture at the Nanjing Institute of Technology, when his parents pushed him to pursue engineering. Wang compromised by studying a field that combined engineering with his artistic leanings: architecture.

In the 1980s, that was a strange choice.

But Wang's interest in the field grew as time went on, and he chose to live and work in Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province after graduation, hoping to tap into the same inspiration that has drawn landscape painters to the city for more than a thousand years.

The Library of Wenzheng College at Suzhou University,

China has many architects who make good of to work in reality," Wang said. "I believe that ture should be both a creative art and a hands-

Wang's first major project in 2000, was where he defined his unique philosophy of architecture. Since then, Wang has focused on balancing his projects with their surrounding environment – an idea common in Suzhou gardening.

The library went on to win the Architecture Arts Award of China in 2004.

But Wang's most recognizable design is the Ningbo History Museum, which was applauded by the 2012 Pritzker prize jury. Built of recycled materials, such as roof tiles and bricks from dismantled walls, the building appears striking in photos and has become an urban icon.

Wang excels at scale, and has also completed 21 buildings on 130 acres at the Xiangshan Campus of the China Academy of Art in Hangzhou. His structures blend effortlessly into the scenery.

And Wang's work has been every bit as successful abroad.

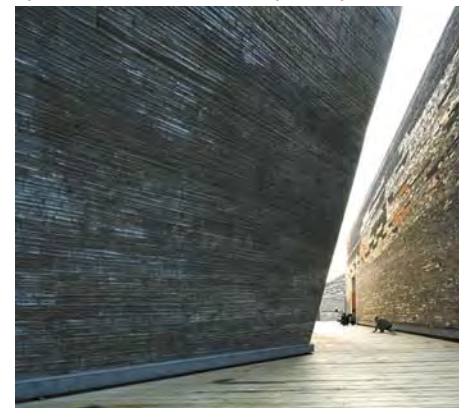
In 2007, Wang won the First Global Award for Sustainable Architecture from France; in 2010, he and his wife Li Wenyu won the German Schelling Architecture Prize for significant designs; last year, Wang received the French Golden Medal from the Academy of Architecture.

Wang's works have been increasingly appreciated by international professionals since his participation in the



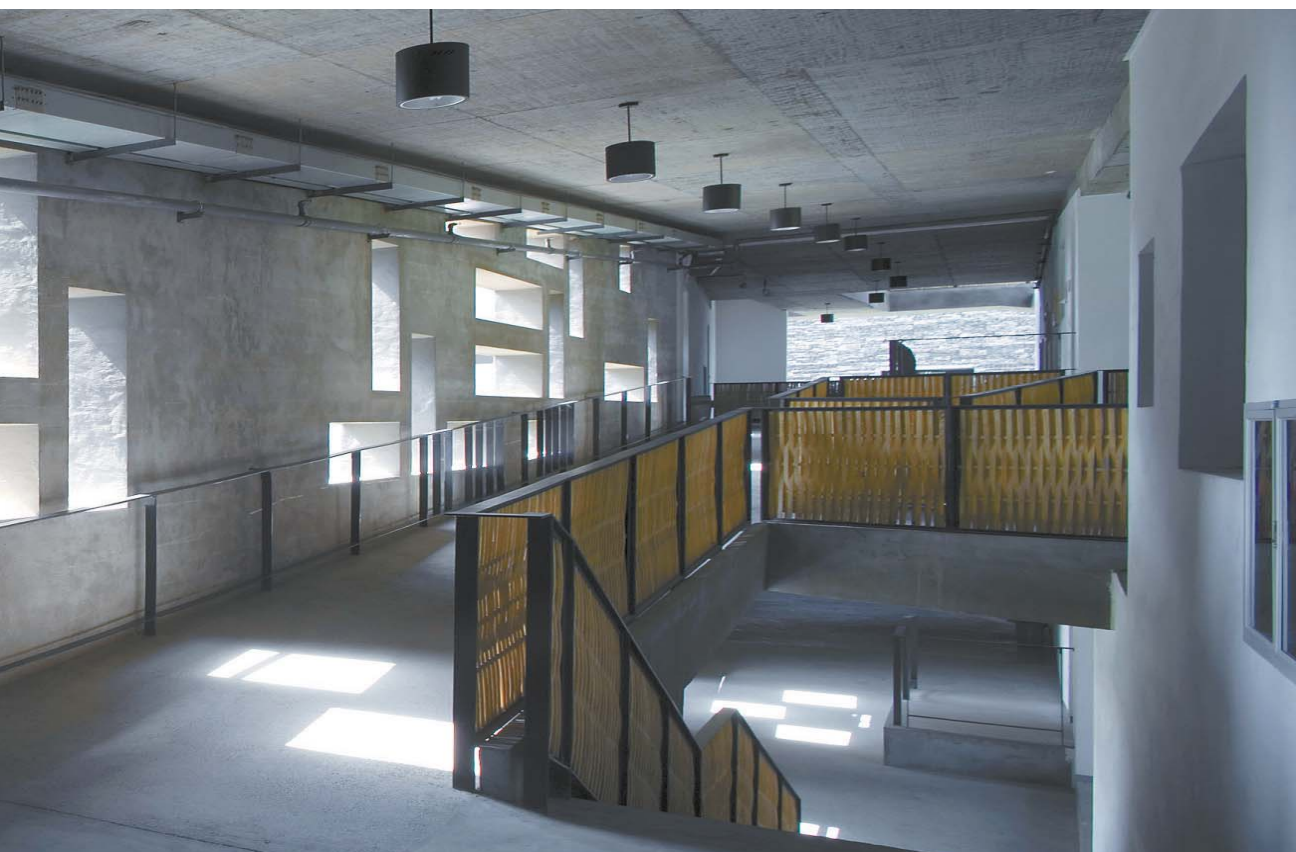
Ningbo Tengtou Pavilion, Shanghai Expo (2010)

Xiangshan Campus of China Academy of Art, Phase II



Ningbo History Museum (2003-2008): bricks and roof tiles create a special texture and tactile collage.

Prize winner sows



Designs that fail to work in reality

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Decay of a Dome Exhibit, which won a special mention. Wang's designs are so successful because he designs them from the view of the workers who build them. From 1990 to 1998, Wang worked alongside construction workers from 8 am until midnight to learn from under-class how building are completed. The experience taught Wang much about construction practices. "China has many architects who make good designs that fail to work in reality," Wang said. "I believe that great architecture should be both a creative art and a hands-on craft."

In 1997, Wang and his wife Lu Wenyu founded Amateur Architecture Studio in Hangzhou to advocate his pattern of development. "A hundred years ago, the people who built houses were artisans. There was no theoretical foundation for architecture. Today, an official architectural system has been established, but I would rather return to the amateur spirit," he said.

Wang's down-to-earth attitude about construction gives him a lot of power to see his designs to completion. Truly, Wang has a special eye for beauty and usefulness in real life. He draws inspiration from his interests in calligraphy, Suzhou gardens and paintings. Most significantly, he

Venice Biennale.

In 2006, his Tiled Garden at the Chinese Pavilion of the 10th International Architecture Exhibition at the Venice Biennale stunned viewers. In 2010, Wang returned to Venice with

makes smart use of the recycled tiles and bricks to connect the past and the present.

Several years ago Wang learned that many tiles and bricks could be recycled when town and village homes are dismantled to make room for urban construction. He started to collect old bricks and roof tiles and reuse them to create rich textural and tactile collages. He also visits old villages throughout Zhejiang Province to learn how such materials were recycled in the past.

Wang hopes to instill in his students the same hands-on approach that has made his own work so successful. "In this way, our own traditions can be inherited by the next generation, and we will gradually develop and enrich our own architectural system," Wang said.

He takes his students to visit the Suzhou gardens each spring for field study. Wandering the gardens and appreciating their designs, Wang gives his students three hints: "Be a person with human interests before being an architect. Don't think about things that are important, but think about things that are appealing and realize them with your own hands. Building a house is like building a small world."

He hopes to sow the seeds of inspiration in China's next generation of architects.

"China offers unprecedented opportunities for good and creative architects. I believe that a prize like the Pritzker will stimulate more of the public to take an interest in architecture, and will inspire more students to pursue it as a profession," Wang said.



Recycled
structure and

Decay of a Dome Exhibit (2010): 12th Venice Biennale of Architecture, Venice, Italy

Photos by Amateur Architecture Studio



Wang Shu

Biography

Born on November 4, 1963 in Urumqi, Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, Wang Shu received his master's degree in 1988 from the Department of Architecture at Nanjing Institute of Technology. He studied for a Ph.D at the Tongji University School of Architecture from 1995 to 2000.

In 1997, Wang Shu and his wife, Lu Wenyu, founded their professional practice in Hangzhou, calling it "Amateur Architecture Studio."

In 2003, Wang Shu became head of the Department of Architecture at the China Academy of Art in Hangzhou. In 2007, he became its dean.

Last year, he became the first Chinese architect to hold the position of "enzo Tange Visiting Professor" at Harvard Graduate School of Design in Cambridge, Massachusetts. He is also a frequent lecturer at universities around the world.

He has participated in international exhibitions in Venice, Hong Kong, Brussels, Berlin and Paris.



Library of Wenzheng College at Suzhou University (1999-2000)



Half the building is below ground level. The library received the Architecture Arts Award of China in 2004.

Lust and love today



By Zhang Yuting

Lust and Love of the Young and Liberated, a new art exhibition, opened last Friday at 798 Art District. Among the big names with works on display are Chi Peng, Chen Ke and Song Kun, some of the most popular artists from the '70s and '80s generations.

Over the last several decades, many Chinese youth have come to value expression – especially of raw emotions like lust, which was formerly taboo.

Zhu Zhu, organizer of the exhibition

The exhibition consists of six parts: Memory of the Confined Era, Folk Carnival, Cutie's World, Nomadic Zone, Expression Dialectics and Only Myth. Each represents a step in the changing process of how people treat their emotions.

In the first part, Memory of a Confined Era, each piece presents a young artist's memories of the years of his childhood when personal emotions were punished.

Back Garden, painted by Dong Wensheng, shows an old garden where uncultured, naked boys fail to eliminate their passions. In the second part, named "Folk Carnival," visitors can read artists' explanations about the transformation of China's society.

"The body was marked by politics even when it stood against the official ideology," said Zhu Zhu, a poet and the curator of the exhibition.

Love and lust were critical flags raised to resist authority. The Chinese way of masking carnal desire behind daily life may be proof of the population's uneasiness after seeing its dreams of Utopia smashed.

Creations in the later parts show the young artists' rational thoughts about love and lust. The slogan "easy life" is being recognized by more and more young people who want to shake off idealistic pursuit for enlightenment and liberation.

The exhibition includes photos, films, sculptures and installations. "Their cultural contexts and methods of communication are completely different, but they are combined in this exhibition because of their common focus," Zhu said.

The liberation of culture and elevation of love and lust has been a long process in China, where conservative ideals have reigned supreme

for hundreds of years.

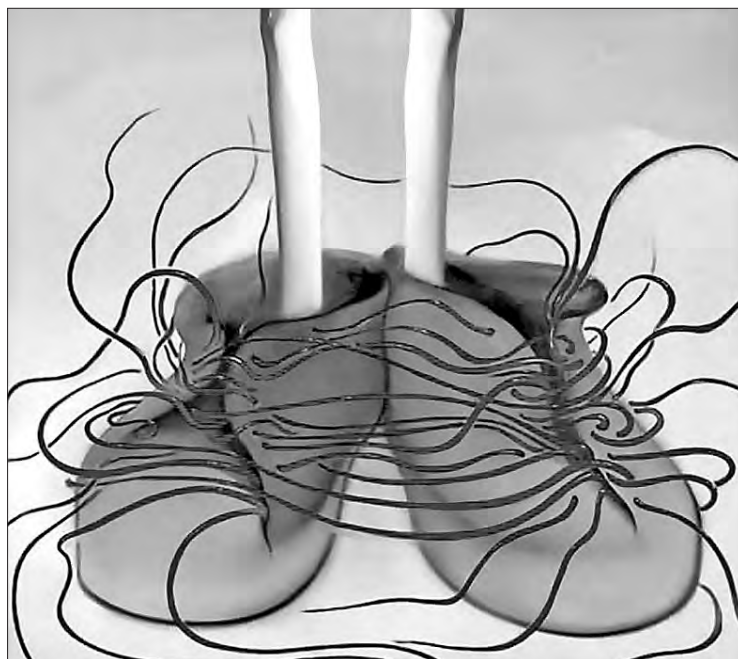
In December 1988, an exhibition of oil paintings on bodies was held at the National Art Museum of China. The first open exhibition of body art showed more than 130 paintings from 28 artists and was indisputably recognized a sign of social revival and individual ideology.

"People living in this open age may think the works showed at the exhibition in 1988 were nothing but bodies, but the giant shock it gave people only 30 years ago is beyond description," Zhu said.

In the past, individual emotion was held captive by collective beliefs. Eventually, people came to realize the two things were not compatible and were encouraged to pursue their own personal values. "That's why the exhibition in 1988 attracted more than 220,000 people – a record that remains to be broken," Zhu said.

Zhu said that "liberated" has two meanings in the context of the exhibition. China's social liberation has been accompanied by a liberation of lust.

"The artists born in the '70s and '80s grew up during a historic age. Their creations contain their own thoughts about the body, emotions and lust. These are a significant expression of both themselves and their complicated social state," Zhu said.



Chen Ke: The Binding of Love

Chen Ke was born in 1979 and influenced by comics and animation. She prefers simple, intimate and direct figures that can touch the public and expand the boundaries of art. Her paintings narrate moving scenarios.

In "The Binding of Love,"

his character's slim legs contrast against two giant shoes, implying the heavy sense of responsibility that comes with love.

"Love carries both the pain of separating from yourself and the happiness of combining with another. As does lust," she said.

New Pants: Sex Drugs Internet

Pang Kuan, from the pop rock band New Pants, designed an installation for this exhibition. As Pang sees it, "love and lust" have always been at the forefront of popular culture even when many young people were unwilling to discuss them.

He advocates an open attitude toward sex. One song on New Pants' new album shares its title with a piece in the exhibition: "SEX DRUGS INTERNET." To some degree, liberation has done little to enhance the spiritual quality of life and break inner taboos. Many young people are falling in love with the world of the Internet, where their youth and vitality are exploited by the lovers who only exist on their hard disks.

Pang Kuan and Peng Lei present their work at the exhibition



Wen Ling: Brave to kiss

Wen Ling has the notoriety of having opened China's first photography blog. His photos included in this exhibition recorded middle school students kissing on Beijing's old and dirty streets.

The boys' sparse beards and girls' grown bodies are hidden by their baggy uniforms. The excitement and inebriation on their young faces reflects their enormous courage to follow their hearts even when faced with others' gossip.



Wen Ling

Photos provided by Star Gallery

“China Film Archives plays an important role in film archival and research”



Searching mines.

By Zhang Dongya

The 20-episode documentary series *China Peacekeeping Action* aired on CCTV earlier this month.

The series, recorded by five members of the national armed forces, records how China's peacekeeping forces have participated in United Nations (UN) missions abroad.

Since 2003, they have documented Chinese peacekeepers' work in Lebanon, Liberia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Darfur.

Soldiers' mission for peace

Director Shang Changyi, 47, has been a member of the People's Liberation Army since he was 18. He filmed several military documentaries before focusing on peacekeeping work in 2003, when China sent its first soldiers to Africa.

During the 2006 Lebanon War, the team recorded Chinese soldiers who were working as minesweepers in the south of the country. Shortly before their arrival, a French peacekeeper was injured when a mine detonated, breaking his arm and blinding him in one eye.

"I knew it would be dangerous. But as a documentary director and member of the military, my place is on the battlefield," Shang said.

They also recorded the peacekeepers' efforts to build roads and bridges in the sweltering tropical rainforest.

"When I walked into the jungle for the first time, I dared not stare too deep into the foliage. I had no idea how many guns were pointed at me. All I could do was pray I wouldn't be shot," he said.

Their most challenging mission was to the Darfur region of Sudan as part of the UN's largest peacekeeping effort in history. The film crew left to document the mission in March 2010, when they learned that 55 soldiers died serving as peacekeepers during the last two years. They arrived after the Sudan general election of 2010 when violence erupted.

When gunfire erupted around the peacekeepers' camp in Darfur, Shang was there to film it.

Epidemic disease was another challenge, and each of the film crew's deployments was preceded by inoculations against cholera and malaria.

The episodes paint a vivid picture of the life of a peacekeeper. Most locals were friendly and showed their appreciation for the Chinese aid – especially their help in maintaining order and building roads and bridges. However, on occasion they met with hostility.

The crew has completed six documentaries about China's participation in UN peacekeeping missions. The last, *China Peacekeeping Action*, commemorates the 20th anniversary of China's first time sending soldiers to participate in a peacekeeping mission.



The film crew shares pictures with the locals.



Peacekeepers salute



Chinese medics are welcomed by their colleagues.



Ready to deploy

Photos provided by China Peacekeeping Action film crew

Spring cleaning for the apartment

By Annie Wei

Ready throw open your windows and welcome spring? Maybe it's time to throw out some winter dust first.

Beijing Today has a handy list of organic cleaning products and advice to help you tidy up for spring.

1. Pots, pans and bowls

Cast iron can be scrubbed with a cloth and rinsed away with salt. For stainless steel, heat and hot water will do, with a little bit of vinegar.

For an environmentally friendly and low-carbon lifestyle, you can try to replace commercial cleaning products by using vegetable tea seeds powder (25 yuan for 500 grams). It's natural and free of chemical ingredients. It's easy to use: add two spoons of seed powder, mix it with 30 milliliters of water and use a soft sponge to wipe the powder to scrub plates and bowls; then rinse everything.

Vegetable tea seeds powder

Where: Jiasiduo supermarket, (near Lidu Hotel) Jiangtai Xi Lu, Chaoyang District

Open: 9 am – 8 pm

Tel: 5135 7745

2. Humidifier

The city will get only drier in spring, making humidifiers necessary. But do you know how to maintain one? If left unclean for too long, dangerous black mold may form. Drain the water in your humidifier and use hydrogen peroxide or potassium permanganate solution to wipe away mold. Rinse the humidifier and wipe it dry. To keep your humidifier safe, remember to clean it thoroughly once every two or three weeks.

3. Sinks

Fill your sink with water and pour in bleach to disinfect, then scrub the sink with baking soda to remove away stains. Rinse and wipe.

4. Used items

Discard used food items from your refrigerator and freezer, like aged herbs, spices and vegetables.

5. Safer cleaning products

To have a thorough cleanup of your apartment, including the floor, drawer and every nook and cranny, you might consider disinfectants that don't use toxins.

Try brands like Seventh Generation, which are available in stores like April Gourmet or BHG. These brands claim to be nontoxic, with disinfecting products made with ingredients derived from plants.



Photo provided by Google.com

New furniture

By Annie Wei

There's nothing like adding some new pieces of furniture to reenergize the home. A local photographer Zhou Zhiyi shares some pieces he just bought. "They are new design pieces from my designer and architect friends, and they give the apartment an arty edge," Zhou said.



Similar furniture are available at amodernhouse.com.cn.

Photos by Zhou Zhiyi



Delicious Indian meals surrounded by antiques



Cashew nut salad, 60 yuan

By Annie Wei

Of Beijing's few Indian restaurants, the most authentic is hidden inside Face Bar and focuses on cuisine from northern India.

Reopened in February with a new chef who hails from that area, Hazara is seeking to make its mark.

We started with a mango lasi (20 yuan), a classic Indian drink that's light and not too sweet or sour.

We highly recommend the cashew nut salad (60 yuan), with diced onions, tomatoes, cucumbers and Indian herbs. It has a delightful flavor of homemade mango chutney, and the cashews give the salad a fantastic texture. The cumin also gives the dish a nice aroma.

Other recommended starters include fried vegetable fritters (45 yuan), cucumber raita (60 yuan) and homemade yogurt with diced onions, cucumbers, tomatoes and herbs.

For main dishes, the creamy black lentils (105 yuan) are a must-try if you're going for a traditional taste. In traditional cooking, the lentils are simmered slowly over a tandoor. But the chef here makes them lighter, so they are easily

paired with rice or naan.

The smoked tandoori chicken (115 yuan for four pieces with bones) is well done. The chicken has a strong smoky flavor but remains tender and delicious.

If you don't like the smoky flavor, butter chicken (105 yuan) is also good and creamy.

Try the eggplant and green peas curry (88 yuan). Eggplant, celery and tomatoes are chopped finely and cooked with curry.

Apart from the restaurant's wide selection of north Indian food, it also has an impressively romantic décor with many Indian antiques.

Haidhi Angkawijana, the owner of restaurant and boutique hotel chain Face Asia, has been collecting antiques for a decade. He displays more than 100 pieces at Face Beijing, including wooded doors, windows, beds, bird-cages, dowry cases, Buddha statues and pieces from an old temple.

Hazara Restaurant

Where: 26 Dongcaoyuan, Gongti Nan Lu, Chaoyang District

Open: noon – 2:30 pm, 5:30-10:30 pm

Tel: 6551 6788



Smoked tandoori chicken, 115 yuan



Fried vegetable fritters, 45 yuan



Cucumber raita, 60 yuan

Photos by Yu Tingmei

Yunnan Restaurant's new outlet at the Village

By Annie Wei

Zhongbalou, or Middle-8th, is one of the most well known Yunnan restaurants in Beijing – and it has expanded. Within two weeks of its opening at Sanlitun Village, a long line was forming at the door every night.

Compared to the other outlets, this new restaurant has something different: truffle roasted duck (179 yuan), highly recommended by the restaurant staff. "Yunnan is known for its truffle and herbs and our duck uses truffle and herbs," said one server.

Most dishes come in small portions at affordable prices, from 32 yuan to 58 yuan. That means one can try more flavors.

Our favorite was the beef jerky eggplant with jasmine (32 yuan), two eggplants soaked in lemongrass and mint flavors and topped with beef jerky. The dish was light yet full of flavor.

Dishes stewed in pots have a delightful tartness from fermented

tomatoes and preserved plums, like stewed tomatoes and chicken (58 yuan) and stewed fish (starting from 68 yuan depending on the spices). The sourness helps dishes like stewed pig feet (58 yuan) taste less greasy, and softens them up.

Yunnan mushrooms (from 32 yuan to 188 yuan) are worth trying because the region is known for growing the best in China.

Unique regional dishes like fried bamboo worms (68 yuan) with vegetables are interesting.

Other classic dishes like *qiguoji* (starting from 38 yuan), clear chicken broth cooked in clay pot; stir-fried eggs with jasmine (28 yuan); and roasted fish wrapped in banana leaves (58 yuan) are available at the new outlet.

For drinks, try suanjiaozhi (38 yuan for pitcher for three), tamarind pulp juice, sweet and sour.

The restaurant receives fewer cus-



Stewed tomatoes and chicken, 58 yuan



Stewed tofu and meat, starting from 50 yuan

Photos by An Xu

Zhongbalou

Where: Floor 4, Sanlitun Village, 19 Sanlitun Lu, Chaoyang District

Open: 11 am – 9:30 pm

Tel: 6415 8858

Dining

Clay-pot double boiled soups

Satisfy your craving and bolster your health with our selection of traditional clay-pot double-boiled soups served with a sumptuous dinner buffet.

Where: Hilton Beijing, 1 Dongfang Lu, Dongsanhuan Bei Lu, Chaoyang District

Cost: 268 yuan (15 percent surcharge)

Tel: 5868 5000



All-you-can-eat dim sum

Ignite your taste buds at the elegant Royal Restaurant with a sumptuous feast of delectable Cantonese dim sum, a soup of the day and a cup of premium Chinese tea.

Where: Royal Restaurant, Sunworld Dynasty Hotel, 50 Wangfujing Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: Daily, 11:30 am – 3 pm

Tel: 5816 8888 ext. 8288

Airlines

British Airways and VisitBritain extend promotion

Chinese travelers looking for the perfect opportunity to visit the UK need to look no further than British Airways and VisitBritain's promotional rate of 2,300 yuan for travel from Shanghai.

In addition to the original travel period until March 31, British Airways and VisitBritain have announced that the same great fare will be available between May 3 and June 19. Return fares from Beijing to London/UK start

from 3,800 yuan are available for travel before August 20.

The special promotion is part of British Airways and VisitBritain's global campaign, "Great Britain, You're Invited."

"The response to our latest promotion from our customers in China has been highly encouraging, so we are delighted to be able to extend this offer to allow travelers to enjoy this unbeatable fare well beyond the original travel period," said Kevin McQuillan, British Airways' regional general manager, East Asia.

"We believe the extended time frame will allow Chinese travelers the additional benefit of seeing the great atmosphere of London as it prepares for the Olympics."

Adoption



Dog looking for adoption

My friend picked up a stray dog in her neighborhood, and now she's looking for someone to adopt it since she already owns her own dog.

The dog is male, white, about a year old and generally quiet. It has all its shots and has been sanitized.

Tel: 13810179297

Email: yooho@hotmail.com

Hotel

Jinghua Travel Awards 2011 honors Swissotel Beijing

Swissotel Beijing, at the Hong Kong Macau Center, was awarded the Model Hotel Award at the recent 2011 Jinghua Tourism New Model. Organized by the *Beijing Times*, the award recognized four of the city's finest hotels.



Beijing Times is a leading daily newspaper with an influential weekly travel section. The paper invited readers to nominate their favorite travel agents, online travel service providers, tourist destinations, airlines, hotels and theme parks.

"On behalf of over 700 team members at Swissotel Beijing, we are delighted and honored to receive this prestigious award. Winning this award, based on votes from our guests, is a validation of our Swiss standards, and we owe this to our great customer base that has supported us for the past 21 years," said Jack Breisacher, general manager of Swissotel Beijing.

Shangri-la 2012 Wedding Fair helps couples say 'I Do'



On March 3 and 4, the Shangri-La Hotel, Beijing – named the capital's best wedding venue – hosted four sessions of "I Do, Falling in Love with Shangri-La" 2012 Wedding Fair.

The event was organized together with popular wedding businesses such as Shu Xin Wedding, The Knot, ETG Staging Connections, LAN-YU Design and Fang Hua Pearl Jewellery. The Wedding Fair attracted 160 couples.

The themes of the event were "blue for togetherness," "purple for accompanying" and "red for devotion." Using the most trendy micro-film technology, the fair presented a touching live action performance. The fair also utilized a 300-square-meter LED color screen with high-end audio and lighting equipment to create an enthralling show, bringing unprecedented surround audio-visual enjoyment to guests.

Ctrip and Marriott International take next step in partnership

Marriott Rewards, the highly acclaimed loyalty program of Marriott International, and Ctrip.com International have joined forces to offer Chinese travelers a great variety of hotels and rewarding opportunities when they stay at any of Marriott International's 3,600 hotels around the world.

Marriott Rewards members will soon be able to earn Ctrip points when they stay at any of Marriott International's hotels. This partnership is the first of its kind between a global hotel loyalty program and Ctrip. In addition, Ctrip announced today it has completed the implementation of a real-time global connectivity with Marriott International. It is Ctrip's first real-time XML connectivity with a global hotel chain. Ctrip will have to access Marriott's inventory and rates in real time so customers are able to receive an instant reservation confirmation.



(By Jackie Zhang)

Nightlife

72 Unplug

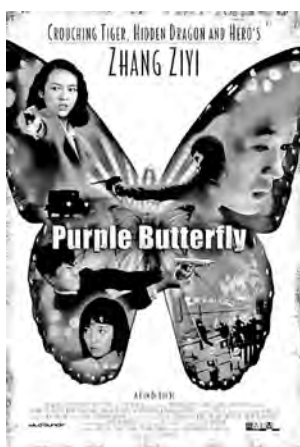
It may seem like a simple number, but 72 means "kaleidoscope" in ancient Chinese mythology. Borrowing that concept, 72 Band seeks to use every performance to explore the mysteries of music by combining different forms for an undefined musical style. Gou Mao, a Taiwanese folk musician, will guest perform, singing punk music with an acoustic guitar.

Fri, Mar. 16

Where: 7 Dongmianhua Hutong, Jiaodaokou Nan
Dajie, Dongcheng District
When: 9-11 pm
Admission: 50 yuan, 40 yuan pre-sale
Tel: 6401 5269



Sat, Mar. 17



Movie

Purple Butterfly

Purple Butterfly is a 2003 Chinese film directed by Lou Ye – his third film, after *Weekend Lover* and *Suzhou River*.

Cynthia and a Japanese student, Itami, fall in love in Japanese-controlled Manchukuo prior to the war, but Itami is soon forced to return to Japan. Years later, they return to Shanghai but as key members in different factions – Cynthia as part of the Purple Butterfly, a powerful resistance group against the Japanese occupation, and Itami as a member of a Japanese secret police unit assigned to dismantle Purple Butterfly.

Where: Ullens Center For Contemporary Art, 798 Art Zone, 4 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: 4:30-6:30 pm

Admission: 15 yuan, 10 yuan for students

Tel: 8459 9269

Exhibition

Ma Qiusha: Static Electricity

This is the second personal exhibition that Ma Qiusha has held in 798's Beijing Comment. Ma prefers to deal with the real world. Various media, including video, installations and paper-based artworks, show the connections between common occurrences and memory.

Where: Beijing Comment, 798 Art Zone, 4 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until April 19, daily except Monday, 10 am – 6 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 8456 2862



Drama

A Madman's Diary

The drama *A Madman's Diary* is adapted from Lu Xun's novel of the same name, which kick-started the May 4th Movement in 1919. Lu created a madman who fought against reality and sought to expose the disadvantages of feudalism.

"We are living in the world that Lu Xun predicted years ago," said director Li Jianjun. "Being brave enough to doubt the world around us should be



Mon, Mar. 19

Exhibition

Tony Cragg: Sculptures And Drawings

Tony Cragg is an influential British visual artist who specializes in sculpture and is a champion of modern British art. His work combines rational and poetic beauty. The imaginative materials in his

sculptures are the result of his start in science. This will be the first time that Cragg has held an exhibition in China, with 176 works created in the past 15 years selected by the artist himself.

Where: CAFA Art Museum of China Central Academy of Fine Arts, 8 Huajiadi Nan Dajie, Chaoyang District

When: Until April 15, daily except Monday, 10:30 am – 5:30 pm

Admission: 15 yuan

Tel: 6477 1575



Tue, Mar. 20

Tuesday, March 20

Culture Salon

Drama is Somehow Life, Life is Like A Drama: Ma Lianliang

Ma Lianliang in one of the most famous Peking Opera masters of the 20th century. He was known as the "Big Four," with Yu Shuyan, Gao Qingkui and Yan Jupeng. What makes him an icon is the immensely influential school he created. Stories about Ma's life and career will be shared by the host.

Where: Lan Chayi, 4F, Mei Lanfang Theater, 32 Ping'anli Xi Dajie, Xicheng District

When: 7:30-9:30 pm

Admission: 30 yuan

Tel: 13811135537



Nightlife

Super Bad Men and D.B Cooper

Exaggerated appearances are just the band's way of hiding their kindness. D.B Cooper is an original band devoted to presenting the glamour of live music and mixing various musical elements.

Where: Blue Stream Bar, 183 Jiugulou Dajie, Xicheng District

When: 9-11 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 6403 2597

Wed, Mar. 21



Sun, Mar. 18

promoted again."

Where: Oriental Palace Theater, 47 Longfusi Street, Dongcheng District

When: 7:30-9:30 pm

Admission: 30-180 yuan

Tel: 6402 2966

Thu, Mar. 22



Documentary

In a Better World

A provocative film that explores the difficult choices between revenge and forgiveness, *In a Better World* follows two Danish families and the unusual and dangerous friendship that develops between them. Bullied at school, Elias is defended by Christian, a boy greatly troubled over his mother's death. When the two become involved in an act of revenge with potentially tragic consequences, it's their parents who are left to help them come to terms with the complexity of human emotions, pain and empathy in this 2010 Academy Award and Golden Globe winner for Best Foreign Film.

Where: China Film Archive, 3 Wenhuiyuan Lu, Haidian District

When: 7-9 pm

Admission: 20 yuan

Tel: 6225 4422

(By Zhang Yuting)

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Next week

Editors: Zhang Dongya Zhao Hongyi Designer: Zhao Yan

BEIJING TODAY



Bronze human head unearthed in Sanxingdui

Other regular displays:

National Museum Collection Highlights of Chinese Modern Masterpieces: Central Hall 1

Ancient Chinese Bronze: Central Hall 2

Ancient Chinese Jades: Gallery S13

Ancient Chinese Money: Gallery S11

Classical Paintings of Ancient China: Gallery S12

Other temporary displays:

Qing Dynasty Scholars' Calligraphy from the Collection of Xiaomangcang Studio: Gallery S14

Back to Pristine Beauty: Art of Chen Lizhong's Shoushan Stone Carving: Gallery N17

The Achievements in China's Animation and Comics Industry Since the 17th National Congress of the Communist Party of China: Galleries S1-S4

Upcoming exhibitions:

Architectural Design Exhibition of the National Museum of China: Gallery S9

Ming and Qing Furniture

Where: 16 East Chang'an Jie, Dongcheng District

Biggest museum opens in Beijing

By Wu Hao

The National Museum of China, located on the east side of Tian'anmen Square, officially opened on March 1.

After four years of renovation and expansion, the museum was expanded from 65,000 square meters to nearly 200,000 square meters with 48 exhibition halls and more than 1.2 million relics, making it the biggest museum in the world.

The new building also has shops offering tea, coffee and souvenirs, as well as an auditorium and a 700-seat theater.

In addition to traditional audio guides, visitors can also use their cell phones to find detailed descriptions, pictures and videos of certain exhibits.

The museum allows people to book tickets online, and has rolled out a host of other technologically advanced features.



Exhibits on the exhibitions in the museum

Photos by Wu Hao

The Road of Rejuvenation

Duration: Permanent

Venue: Galleries N5-N7, N12-N15

With 1,280 pieces of cultural relics and 875 pictures, this exhibition showcases Chinese history from the Opium War of 1840 to present.

The exhibition is divided into five sections: "China Reduced to a Semi-Colonial and Semi-Feudal Society," "Seeking a Way to Save China," "The Communist Party of China with the Historical Mission for Independence and Liberation," "Building a Socialist New China" and "Socialist Road with Chinese Characteristics."

Ancient China

Duration: Permanent

Venue: Galleries N20-N25, S15-S18, S20

Featuring 10 galleries and covering an area of 17,000 square meters, this exhibition tells the dynastic history of China in eight sections, from prehistory times to the Ming and Qing dynasties.

Ancient China features more than 2,500 objects, including 2,000 cultural relics, among them about 500 being first-rate. The eagle-shaped pottery vessel (Yangshao Culture), jade dragon (Hongshan

Culture), Sanxingdui bronze mask with protruding eyes, bronze zun container with four arms (late Shang Dynasty), terracotta warriors (Qin Dynasty), sancai-glazed pottery horses (Tang Dynasty), doucai porcelain jar (Ming Dynasty), phoenix coronet of Empress Dowager Xiaojing (Ming Dynasty) and other objects present a comprehensive view of China's political and social development, as well as its foreign relations.

Ancient Chinese Buddhist Sculpture

Duration: Permanent

Venue: Central Hall 2

After Buddhism spread to China around the 1st century, Buddhist sculptures incorporating traditional Chinese elements gradually resulted in a unique Chinese style.

The themes, materials and techniques in ancient Chinese Buddhist sculpture varied according to the region and period. Highlighted in this exhibition are the finely carved stone sculptures from Qingzhou, the radiant seated bodhisattva in the grottoes at Tianlongshan carved during the middle Tang, and the figures of Tibetan Buddhism produced by imperial workshops in the Ming Dynasty. In

particular, the elegant wood-carved bodhisattva of the Song Dynasty is an unparalleled work of wooden Buddhist sculpture.

In addition, the museum also hopes to provide visitors with a peek at world art. The Art of the Enlightenment is the largest art exhibition between China and Germany.

The Art of the Enlightenment

Duration: Until March 31

Venue: Galleries S6-S8

The current exhibition occupies an area of 3,000 square meters and displays around 600 loan pieces from three German museums.

The exhibition explores the central motifs and ideas, themes and concerns of Enlightenment art, with masterpieces from national museums in Berlin, Dresden and Munich. It presents the entire artistic spectrum of the arts from that era – from paintings, prints, peep shows, sculptures, books, clothing and furniture, divided into nine sections, including "Court life in the Age of Enlightenment," "Perspectives of Knowledge," "Love and Sensibility," "Back to Nature," "Emancipation and the Public Sphere," "The Revolution of Art."